

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the instant application:

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing help within an interactive voice response application comprising the steps of:

determining an interactive voice response event;

classifying said event as a default help request if said event is one of a no-match event and a time-out event, wherein the no-match event occurs when said event does not correspond to a user option provided by the application, and wherein the time-out event occurs if a user fails to respond to an application prompt within a predetermined duration of time;

classifying said event as a user initiated help request if said event is a user request for help and not a non-help request;

setting a time for receiving user input to a default value if said event is classified as said default help request;

setting said time for receiving user input to a value less than said default value if said event is classified as said user initiated help request, wherein said interactive voice response application takes ~~programmatic action~~ one of a plurality of different programmatic actions upon expiration of said time for receiving user input;

repeating a previous presentment of a menu or other prompt if a first time-out event occurs subsequent to a no-match event;

if a second time-out event occurs after repeating the previous presentment of the menu or other prompt, presenting a predetermined help message; and,

if the first time-out event occurs subsequent to a no-response event, presenting the predetermined help message such that the previous presentment of the menu or other

prompt is not repeated;

if said event is a default help request, determining whether the default help request is a no-match event or whether said default help request is a time-out event;

performing one of the plurality of programmatic actions if the default help request is a no-match event; and

performing a different one of the plurality of programmatic actions if the default help request is a time-out event.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said default value is at least six seconds and wherein said value less than said default value is at most three seconds.

5. (Currently Amended) A method for providing help within an interactive voice response application comprising the steps of:

determining an interactive voice response event corresponding to a help message request;

classifying said event as a default help request if said event is one of a no-match event and a time-out event, wherein the no-match event occurs when said event does not correspond to a user option provided by the application, and wherein the time-out event occurs if a user fails to respond to an application prompt within a predetermined duration of time, and classifying said event as a user initiated help request if said event includes a user request for help;

setting a time-out threshold to a default time;

if and only if said event includes a user request for help, decreasing said time-out threshold;

audibly presenting a first help message;

once said first help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer; and
if said no-response timer exceeds said time-out threshold, audibly presenting a second help message, wherein said second help message comprises one of a plurality of different help messages;

repeating a previous presentment of a menu or other prompt if a first time-out event occurs subsequent to a no-match event;

if a second time-out event occurs after repeating the previous presentment of the menu or other prompt, presenting a predetermined help message; and,

if the first time-out event occurs subsequent to a no-response event, presenting the predetermined help message such that the previous presentment of the menu or other prompt is not repeated;

if said event is a default help request, determining whether the default help request is a no-match event or whether said default help request is a time-out event;

audibly presenting one of the plurality of help messages if the default help request is a no-match event; and

audibly presenting a different one of the plurality of help messages if the default help request is a time-out event.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

once said second help message has been presented, starting a no-response timer;
and

if said no-response timer for said second help message exceeds said time-out threshold, performing a previously established IVR operation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes resetting said time-out threshold to said default time.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes audibly presenting a help message.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein said previously established IVR operation includes at least one of cycling back to an initial help message, establishing a connection with a human agent, and establishing a connection with an automated system.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said action which initialized said first help message includes at least one from the group consisting of said explicit user selection action, a no-response event, and a no-match event.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
after said presentation of said first help message has begun, receiving an explicit user request for help; and

if said non-response threshold equals said default time, decreasing said time-out threshold.

12. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said decreased time-out threshold is at most three seconds.

13. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein said default time is at least six seconds.

14-30. (Cancelled).